

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Facility Name: EAST MESA JUVENILE
DETENTION FACILITY

Inspection date: 08-01-2009
Last Inspection Date: 1-30-2008

Superintendent: Dan DeLeon, Director
Address: 446 Alta Road
San Diego, CA 92154

Telephone Number: (619) 4014906
Fax: (619) 401-4921

Type of Facility: Detention Facility

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge:
Honorable Susan Huguenor

Staff Interviewed: Keith Hicks, Admin. Supervisor
Barry Calabrese, Supervisor
Laurie, Nurse
CDPOs on duty (informally)
Roberto Carrillo, Principal
Kitchen Staff (informally)

Commission Inspection Team:
Miguel Blanco
Sally Cox
Henry Mann
Jessica St. Clair

Juvenile Justice Commission Chair: Jessica St. Clair
Telephone Number: (858) 694-4422

Major Concerns and Recommendations:

Overall, the inspection team was very impressed with the facility. The team recommends the following:

1. Probation should continue to monitor the budget for opportunities to hire staff for vacant positions.
2. EMJDF should work closely with SAY San Diego to ensure that the new programming contracts adequately meet the needs of the youth in the facility, especially needs related to gang prevention/intervention and parent classes.
3. The cause of the odor coming from the shower in the clinic should be determined and repaired.

Comments:

It should be noted that this facility only detains male youth.

SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION INDICATE:

Number of Suicides: 0
Number of Deaths from other causes: 0

Number of Attempted Suicides: 0
Number of Escapes: 0
Number of Attempted Escapes: 0

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Local Inspections:

Title 15 Health: February 19, 2008
Fire Inspection: March 2009
Building Inspection: February 17, 2009
Grand Jury: February 2008

Other Inspections:

CMA/Medical Quality Inspection: February 19, 2009
CSA: May 2008

Date of Last Fire Drill: July 30, 2009. There is a facility-wide drill held once per month and each unit holds a fire drill once per month.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Has the facility exceeded capacity since the last inspection?

No. There are currently 260 youth in the facility. The facility was built for 40 youth per unit, but at present the capacity has been capped at 30 youth per unit; 58 youth are in the Youthful Offender Unit (YOU) program. On the date of the inspection, there were 39 youth who were 18 years of age and three youth who were 19 years of age. Twenty-one (21) days is the typical length of stay for a youth in this facility.

Does the facility house minors under Section 601 Welfare & Institutions Code? If yes, are 601s separated from 602s?

There are no youth designated as 601s in the facility.

STAFFING

Staff to Child Ratio – Awake and Sleeping:

Awake: 1 Staff: 10 Wards Sleeping: 1 Staff: 28 Wards

Communication in Language minor can understand?

Most staff are bilingual (English/Spanish) and translators are on-call if additional translation services are needed in other languages.

Diversity of Staff:

Supervisor Hicks reported that the 126 staff members are very diverse. The tour of the facility and the units confirmed his statements both as to gender and ethnicity.

Staff/Minor interactions:

Supervisor Hicks described staff/youth interactions as good. He noted that he tries conscientiously to assign staff members with different strengths and personalities to each unit and that he stresses to staff members the importance of being consistent, fair and firm. Supervisor Hicks' experience at both camps and closed facilities has enabled him to make observations of how needs of staff and youth might differ

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

depending on the style of the facility to which they are assigned. Youth receive counseling funded by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. The counseling focuses on case planning and provides an opportunity for the youth to receive one-on-one attention from staff members. Supervisor Hicks described these sessions as decently effective, because the sessions are fairly brief. He noted that these interactions are good for rapport building between staff and youth.

EMJDF has added a corrections counselor to its staff who has had experience working with youth in residential settings. This counselor will develop opportunities for youth to examine goals, values, etc. This position is funded by YOU program money.

Inspection team members are concerned by a recent incident which occurred on May 11, 2009, in the administrative segregation unit which resulted in one staff member being transferred to another facility. The incident resulted in an injury to the staff member's shoulder. It did not appear to be a planned attack on the staff member. A fight between several members was in progress and a youth not involved in the fight attempted to remove the staff member's teargas canister and continued to assault him when he failed in that attempt.

In general, new staff members receive 40 hours of juvenile institutions training, spend two to four weeks shadowing a more experienced staff member in a unit, and attend the Juvenile Institutions Core Academy, which lasts approximately six weeks. A new "Use of Force" training program will begin on September 29, 2009.

Overall, morale in the facility seemed to be good and tension seemed to be low.

Staff Interviews – Comments:

Staff interviewed seemed to be knowledgeable about their respective duties. Detailed information regarding staff interviews are included in the relevant portions of this report.

CONDITIONS OF GROUNDS

Lawns, playing fields, blacktop, asphalt, Other:

Each unit has its own recreation yard, which is about the size of three basketball courts. The team viewed the yard in the "I" unit, which is currently empty. This yard appears clean and free of debris.

EXTERIOR OF BUILDINGS

General condition, Paint, Roof, Drains/Gutters, Other:

In general the facility appeared to be in excellent condition and well-maintained.

INTERIOR OF BUILDINGS

Walls, paint, floors, drains, plumbing fixtures, air vents, windows, etc.:

The inspection team visited the booking area, visiting area, clinic, kitchen and units "B," "C," "D," "F," and "G." "B" is one of two YOU program units. Units "A" and "B" are used to house the 58 youth in this program as the institution has a limit of 30 youth to a unit. "C" is a maximum security unit. "D" is a unit for younger teens. "F" is set up for administrative segregation. "G" is set up as a general population unit. The team also visited unit "I," though it is not occupied currently.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

The building appeared very well maintained. Graffiti was noted in the padded room in the intake area as well as the "Time Out" room in the "G" Unit. Supervisor Calabrese stated that in the past, a retired Correctional Officer would be hired to repair the graffiti; he would gather a group of youth and remove the graffiti from each unit. Since the cutback in funds, this service is no longer available and staff now has this task. There was a foul odor in the shower in the clinic area, which may indicate a plumbing problem.

Are cleaning fluids and chemicals labeled and safely stored?

Each unit has a locked room for supplies.

Weapons Locker location:

Weapons lockers located by main and staff entrances. Weapons are not permitted in the facility.

Recreation/Sports equipment:

Inspection team members observed equipment for basketball and volleyball.

Are the hallways clear and doors propped open?

No doors propped open, hallways are clear.

Court Holding area (if present, access to drinking water and toilet?):

Not applicable to EMJDF. Youth are transported to Kearny Mesa for court dates. There is no adjoining court facility at EMJDF.

Sleeping rooms/dormitories:

There are 30 occupied beds per unit. The rooms the inspection team viewed appeared neat and clean.

Beds – Type? 12" off the floor:

Concrete slabs well off the floors with mattresses and blankets.

Art, books, personal possessions allowed in sleeping rooms?

Books and personal items allowed. Youth in the "A" and "B" units are in the YOU program and are permitted to keep additional books, personal hygiene items and shoes in their sleeping rooms.

Graffiti present?

See Interior of Buildings section.

Ample blankets?

Bedding appeared adequate.

Study Area:

Each unit has two classrooms. Sleeping rooms can be utilized for individual studying.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Adequate lighting?

Yes. Many fixtures have been reworked to prevent vandalizing.

Temperature:

71 degrees.

ORIENTATION OF MINORS

Are minors oriented to rules and procedures?

Most orientation information is provided at Kearny Mesa. Youth are provided with an orientation to this facility, including rules and sexual harassment policies. A rules and sexual harassment policy briefing is held daily.

Are rules and grievance procedures posted?

Yes, in each unit.

Are rules and grievance procedures understood by minors?

Youth must sign a form stating they understand the rules.

Supervisor Hicks estimated there are approximately 15 grievances per month. He says that "markdowns" are the most common grievance.

Minors Interviewed – Comments

Commissioners Blanco and Mann had conversations with minors throughout the facility. One minor interviewed had very few complaints regarding the facility or his treatment by the staff. His main complaint was about the food in general terms (not enough and not what he was used to eating). He also appeared to have a good knowledge of the grievance procedure and appeal process. He stated that his complaints were always promptly considered and reviewed but that "nothing ever happened."

Some minors complained about the taste of the food.

MEALS/NUTRITION

Kitchen – Clean; are knives and chemicals locked?

Kitchen staff led a brief tour of the kitchen area for the team. The kitchen area, including walk-in refrigerator and freezer, appeared very clean. There is very limited food preparation at this facility. Most meals are prepared by the Sheriff's department. Special holiday meals may be prepared in the facility. Knives and other metal cooking utensils are kept locked in the kitchen.

Have the youths working in the kitchen been trained?

Youth are trained, but youth do not prepare food.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Are meals served or cafeteria style?

Meals are served in the common areas of each unit on trays. Meals are transported to the unit on carts that keep the food warm.

Are minors permitted to converse during meals?

They are permitted to converse with other youth at their table, but youth are not permitted to talk across tables while eating.

Is Staff present and supervising?

Yes.

Is weekly menu prepared? Is it posted?

Yes.

Are servings ample, nutritious and appetizing?

Lunch was served during the team's visit. While the serving sizes appeared sufficient, the food did not appear especially appetizing. Also, the team only observed heavily processed meats in the kitchen (hot dogs, bologna, and sausage). EMJDF should consult with the Sheriff's department to determine if other, more wholesome, sources of protein might be available. Supervisor Calabrese noted that he observed the meals appeared to be more nutritious in the past year. He noted more fresh fruit and vegetables were being served.

Are weaker youths protected from having food taken from them?

Sharing is not allowed.

Length of time allowed for eating?

Youth are generally permitted to have 30-40 minutes for meals.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF MINORS

Appearance?

The youth appeared clean and were dressed appropriately. Youth wear clothing with colors that designate the unit to which they are assigned.

Showers – Frequency, Privacy maintained, Supervised by Staff? Any assaults by other youths?

Staff members supervise youth while in the shower. The showers are individual and separated by solid walls and half doors. There have been no assaults in the shower.

Condition of clothing – Does clothing fit? Is it appropriate to weather?

The clothing appeared to be in good condition.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

PROGRAMS

Recreation – type and amount each day:

Physical recreation is provided a minimum of two hours per day - 1 hr morning & afternoon, additional recreation time may be provided on the weekends. Physical recreation includes large muscle exercises/calisthenics and ball sports.

Youth also have access to cards, games and other activities. Two youth were observed playing cards after lunch while other youth were watching a movie.

Exercise – Daily schedule and amount of time each day:

See "Recreation."

Access to Religious Services?

Protestant/Catholic once weekly. Services are held Sunday and Monday respectively. Director DeLeon noted that religious guidance is provided on request, and that volunteer local clergy are available through a local minister who is directing the program.

Medical/Mental health Services:

Juvenile Probation contracts with California Forensic Medical Group. There is a well-equipped clinic on site. Nurses and nurse practitioners are available at all times. Medical doctors, dentists, psychiatrists are available weekly or on call. Probation contracts with Rady Children's Hospital to provide specialty services.

Volunteer Program:

The volunteer program is not very active due to remote location. There are a couple of active volunteers who work with the new correctional counselor. Additional volunteers are needed to be mentors and to spend time talking to the youth.

Programming:

Spectrum no longer contracts with East Mesa. SAY San Diego will be taking over the contracts for many of the programs starting around September. Details of the services they will offer are still being finalized.

Wellness Team - Children's Hospital – This program provides health education for the youth.

Character Counts - Probation Staff – The program emphasizes character-building and includes aggression replacement therapy techniques.

Thinking for Change - Probation Staff – The program emphasizes decision-making skills and positive choices.

Youth Offender Unit (YOU) – Is a program for juvenile offenders who in previous years may have been sent to a state facility. The program can accommodate youth up to 21 years of age. On the date of the inspection team's visit, there were 58 youth in the YOU program. Second Chance now provides the programs for the YOU units in such areas as Community Support Services, Vocational Education, Substance Abuse and Criminal Conduct, Gender Issues, Art, and Victim Awareness.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Sexual Harassment Classes:

Sexual harassment briefings are conducted daily by Probation staff.

Parenting Classes:

Supervisor Hicks anticipates that SAY San Diego will provide parenting classes as part of the new programming contract. SAY San Diego staff will likely present these classes.

DISCIPLINE OF MINORS

Frequency and type:

EMJDF uses a markdown system. Room confinement is used to discipline youth that break rules, have disciplinary issues in school or engage in fighting. Room confinement lasts 0-22 hours. Youth may have a "mini-hearing" if they disagree with the basis for the room confinement. Rules violations are instances when youth may have their time in custody extended for more serious violations such as assaults or possessing contraband (including someone else's medication). Time out rooms are used when youth need to calm down. Probation staff must have approval from the Watch Commander to leave a youth in a time out room for more than one hour. Time out rooms have video camera surveillance.

GRIEVANCES

Number and Type:

An average of 15 grievances are received each month. Most grievances are for markdowns.

TELEPHONE

Access:

Phones are located on each unit. Most phone calls are collect, but staff may permit youth a "free" call home.

CORRESPONDENCE

Is Postage Free? Is incoming and/or outgoing mail read? Is there confidential correspondence?

Postage is free. Probation staff members scan mail for contraband. Photographs are permitted if they are appropriate.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

VISITING

Is there adequate space, convenient times or accommodations to parent work schedule, etc. special visits? Does staff supervise visits? Is there adequate privacy?

Visiting hours have been increased since the last inspection. They are now from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday-Friday; and Sunday visiting is from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. and 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. alphabetically, according to last name. Visitors are parents and approved guardians, attorneys, law enforcement, and medical professionals. Visitors must be 21 years of age. Any other visitors must be approved, typically by Admin. Supervisor Hicks.

Visiting facilities are well laid out and allow for varying levels of privacy. Video conferencing rooms are available.

Have all minors had visits? If no, give reasons:

EMJDF is not accessible using public transit which makes visits difficult for many families.

SCHOOL

Teachers – Number of full-time; frequency of substitutions:

Commissioner St. Clair interviewed Roberto Carrillo, Principal of Sarah Anthony School on August 10. Principal Carrillo provided information about the school and education programs for the youth.

Teachers: 15 full-time contracted teachers; 3 contracted Special Education teachers; 1 limited contract Special Education teacher, 6 long-term substitute teachers.

Number of minors attending school:

Approximately 250.

Number of minors in each classroom:

15 students: 1 credentialed teacher. Special education teachers, teacher's assistants and special education assistants are also present in the classroom depending on the time of day and nature of the activity. When other professionals are in the classroom, the ratio is smaller.

Number of minors on independent study:

None. However, students involved in credit retrieval may take books/materials back to their sleeping rooms. Also, some students take online college credit when appropriate.

Atmosphere of classroom:

Principal Carrillo described the classroom environment as conducive to learning. Teachers are mindful of the diverse experiences and cultural backgrounds from which the youth come and aim to employ culturally conducive teaching methods and strategies. Dr. Holly from Los Angeles has been consulting with the school regarding these techniques.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Adequate Supplies? Books, paper, computers, etc.

School supplies are adequate and the basic necessities are met. Principal Carrillo expressed his interest in ensuring that the modern technology is utilized in the classroom. This commitment is demonstrated by the use of computers and Smart Boards in the classroom.

Activities and coursework:

Aligned with Western Association of Schools & Colleges. Program set and supervised by S.D. County School District. (Court Schools).

The school has a GED program and provides GED tutors. Eligible students may take college classes online. There is a work readiness program that youth can begin while at EMJDF and continue when they are released. There is an ROP program in graphic design that is also available. Principal Carrillo also expressed a desire to provide enrichment activities when possible, examples include art instruction, visits from a resident poet and hip hop classes.

79 youth have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Are minors required to do homework?

All students receive homework.

Number of minors not attending. Reason:

Very few students are not eligible to attend school. Students who are confined to their rooms and are not able to attend school are still given reading material or coursework whenever possible.

Relationship between the school and East Mesa staff.

School staff and Probation staff work well together. Principal Carrillo shared that most issues that arise can be handled at the unit level between teachers and CDPOs. Principal Carrillo meets regularly with Superintendent DeLeon and attends supervisor meetings at the facility. He stated that the cohesion between the school staff and Probation staff is visible to the youth which inhibits their ability to attempt to capitalize on any disconnectedness.

Describe access to school, recreation, and exercise, for minors confined to their rooms.

Level one and two status detainees attend school, recreation, and exercise.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Nurse Laurie gave the inspection team a tour of the clinic area.

EMJDF has a large clinic, which includes treatments rooms, a lab room, a dental room, a nurse's station, consultation rooms, offices and storage space. A physician is on call and there are RNs on site 24 hours per day. A dentist visits approximately once per week. EMJDF contracts with Rady Children's Hospital to provide specialty services, such as orthopedics, and health educators.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
EAST MESA JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY
INSPECTION REPORT
2008 inspection; completed in August 2009

Nurses collect sick call slips daily. Unless it is an emergency, youth are typically seen within eight hours of sick call, though often youth are seen in three hours. If a youth requests medical attention during recreation, such as an inhaler, an RN will typically respond in just a couple of minutes.

The sexually transmitted disease seen mostly frequently in the clinic is Chlamydia.

There is also a psychiatrist on call, and psychologists are at the facility regularly. Typically, they are at the facility from noon-10pm. Youth who refuse to take psychiatric medications are sent to a hospital.

BUDGET IMPACTS

Supervisor Hicks addressed budget impacts to EMJDF. There are currently 16 vacant staff positions at EMJDF. Many of the positions were created for particular programs but cannot be filled under the current budget. Supervisor Hicks reported that some Probation employees are being demoted and 10 DPOs and a few clerks have been laid off. Probation has also been affected by the loss of Prop 36 funds. He also noted that Probation is trying to minimize the use of overtime. There have been programming cuts department-wide which are not necessarily specific to EMJDF. EMJDF reports that while specific programs have not been significantly impacted, the facility has to be extremely careful about purchases.

If funds were not an obstacle, Supervisor Hicks would most like to see additional staff hired for the facility.

/end